

2000 Annual Report Executive Summary

Desert Communities Empowerment Zone

The past year is clearly a turning point for the Zone and Desert Alliance for Community Empowerment (DACE) as we crossed over the threshold of infancy to operational status. Staff and the Board continued to form and develop the structure of the nonprofit organization in addition to implementing projects. In June the Annual Meeting conducted and highlighted by Ceremonial Check Presentations for Rural Business Enterprise Grants by USDA to the Torres Martinez Tribe, Palo Verde Community College and of course DACE. By Late summer projects were being funded, plans for independent staffing and the cornerstone project for DACE were under development. On September 29th, DACE acquired a vacant office building formally a corporate headquarters facility, encompassing 16,000 sq. ft, and established the Regional Community Resource Center. The purpose of the building, besides being DACE's home, is to offer the space for lease to other non-profit or service agencies serving the Desert Communities Empowerment Zone. In addition to the office space, the facility serves as a Conference Center for local events and meetings. The Grand Opening for the Facility took place January 26, 2001 with over 150 participants, including Chris Sundstrom, EZEC Program Director and former USDA State Director, Celeste Cantu.

In October and November, advertisements were placed to seek a permanent Executive Director and at the December meeting the Board interviewed candidates then voted to hire myself, Jeff Hays, as their new Executive Director.